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THE

NEW AGE

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EDITOR: H.D.RAJAH.

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Meerut Conference—Jawahrlal's Election—The Karaikudi Show

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The New Age

VOL. II FEBRUARY 1936 NO. 9

THE POST-WAR WORLD

By **V. Rangaswamy Iyengar**

Each Union has its hierarchy of councils culminating in a national council which is elected in the annual Congress. There is a Trade Union Congress, for the whole U.S.S.R., which is constituted of delegates from each Union and this Congress appoints a National Council which is the central organization for all the Unions. It is in consultation with this Council that the highest planning authorities, the Supreme Council of National Economy and the members of the Cabinet, settle the lines on which the nation's industry shall be conducted and decide on the normal working day and the general tariffs of wage rates for all the forty-six industries. The central body deals with questions relating to food-supply, house accommodation and other personal grievances.

It undertakes the administration and management of the various forms of Social Insurance, the management of the rest houses, convalescent and holiday homes, factory restaurants, members, clubs, libraries and educational classes. It also undertakes to distribute cheap tickets, for the opera, theatre, concert hall or cinema. The All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions sit at least once a year in consultation with the planning authorities in respect of one important matter. Division is to be made of the nation's aggregate product between saving and consuming.

Wages and Salaries :—Subsistence minimum for the lowest grade is fixed with reference to the standard of comfort. The quota of production is fixed for each worker. Piece-work system generally prevails. If a workman produces double the quota fixed for him, he is paid double wages. The piecework system enables the workers to earn from 50 to 500 roubles (2 roubles—one dollar—three rupees). Worker includes both hand worker and brain worker.

The Trade Union structure is developed into an organ designed to enable the whole producing community of the U. S. S. R. to participate in each establishment and each industry. The movements afford every encouragement, and assistance in the way of educational opportunities to the mass of unskilled labowrers to improve their qualification. Evening classes are conducted for this purpose.

* Mr. V. Rangaswamy Iyengar has contributed two Articles which had appeared in our previous issues.

Many a worker, has taken advantage of the evening classes and has risen to, higher positions. His condition before 1914 was deplorable. He was illiterate, drunken, dirty, lascivious, irregular, unpunctual and in efficient. In a short period of fifteen years, he has been transformed. He comes to work regularly and punctually. He gets without charge education for his children and himself and free medical attendance for the whole family (including drugs, hospital charges, etc.) He is freely admitted into convalescent homes. He gets full wages, while away from work on account of illness; his wife if industrially employed gets full wages for eight weeks before and after confinement and free obstetric service. Women workers get the same wages as men workers.

Workers men or women; frequently attend the theatres, the opera as well as the cinema. Workers are voracious readers of dailies, books etc. published by the State. They have a voice in the management of factories or institutes. Their emancipation from the old order has not only given them a higher standard of life measured in food, clothing and other comforts but has also roused their thought, energy and ambition.

Banking:—In the capitalist system it is banking that is primarily responsible for booms, slumps and their attendant evils. It has come to be controlled by speculators and the control has made possible for them to indulge in doubtful enterprises causing enormous loss to the poor depositors. The system causes enormous wastage of wealth and man-power.

The state-organised bank of Soviet Russia is free from all these defects of the capitalist system. Its working is simple.

Every enterprise is allowed to keep one current account only in a particular branch of the state bank. This is intended to avoid an adverse balance.

The Soviet Constitution. There can be real sovereignty of the people according to Mr. and Mrs. Webb, only when, the Collective Will of the people, is expressed effectively through the Constitution. They are satisfied that this conception is realised in the Soviet Constitution, but the structure provided in their scheme is not copied. A new structure suited to the peculiar environments of Soviet Russia, has been evolved.

The main outline of the Constitution is briefly as follows:

There are in the U. S. S. R. seventy odd millions of voters. Each of these voters casts his or her vote in a three-fold capacity. Voters are grouped into three sections.

These are (1) associations of citizens (2) associations of consumers and (3) associations of producers.

Associations of citizens.—There are two classes of citizens, one representing the cities and another the rural area. The former elect the Town Councils and the latter the Village Councils.

Associations of Consumers:— There were in January 1932 45,764 co-operative societies (consumers). Every family belonging to every section of the people is represented in each store.

The membership includes manual labourers, citizens, technicians, doctors, teachers, lawyers and engineers. The store is a democratic body and its affairs are managed by the representatives elected by the members. Each store acts as an electoral body to represent the consumers' aspect.

The credit given is limited to the amount specified in the Plan (Five Year Plan) not only for each particular enterprise but also for each period or stage of production. For instance no more will be advanced to a particular state farm as wages for sowing than is provided and no more for the next operation, until the sowing has been completed.

Foreign Trade in the capitalist system is mere speculation and gambling. Soviet Russia, purchases in foreign markets whatever goods needed for consumption and she exports to the rest of the world what it decides to sell in order to pay for the imports. Under any circumstances, the same organisation is utilised to present the aspect of the people as citizens.

Associations of Producers:—Every one of the voters besides being, a consumer and citizen is also a producer either of goods or services. Each class of producers, has its own Trade Union. Among the producers are included lawyers, doctors, engineers etc., and other brain workers. Each of these Associations represents a particular enterprise and the aspect of man as producer is represented by these Associations.

Each of the three classes of associations has its own hierarchy of councils, District and Provincial,culminating in a National Congress and a National Council.

The District and Provincial Councils are constituted of members chosen by the three different types of associations referred to. The District Council for instance has its own executive body with a president and a secretary and it manages the affairs of the District and it also elects delegates to a Provincial Conference which elects its own Council, to administer the affairs of the province. In this manner various hierarchies rise up culminating in the Russian Congress which elects the Russian National Council. This National Council elects the Executive Committee, Presidium, President and Secretary and it also appoints People's Commissars (Ministers of State) who form a cabinet. It is superior to every other authority in the land.

The above description will make clear the fundamental differences between the general elections in Soviet Russia and the general elections in England, America, or France. In England for instance, a voter as a mere human being gives his vote to a candidate and he is vague or even unaware about the issues involved in the elections and as a voter his function ceases.

In Soviet Russia the issues concerning each of the threefold aspect of man are separately made known. Further each voter actively participates throughout the year, in the affairs through a hierarchy of councils.

The elected representatives of any of these associations appear before their electors often to meet explanatory account of the business in which they have been occupied to answer all questions addressed to them and to hear complaints on all sorts of subjects their electors freely express. There is a ceaseless discussion of public affairs in the thousands of small meetings throughout of U. S. S. R. To put it briefly every adult who is a voter is in touch with the affairs of state, concerning the three-fold aspect of man in some manner or other and he or she is able to express his or her personality in different aspects of life to the fullest extent possible.

In the British or American election a voter besides being ignorant is susceptible to various influences. Employers in joint enterprises, the wealthy capitalist, the press, radio and the power of the political administration - all of them interested in maintaining the capitalist order - confuse and corrupt the electorate and make democracy a farce.

" It is not easy to dispute the claim " say Mr. and Mrs. Webb, "that the electoral system of Soviet Russia however we may designate it, more accurately expresses the people's will than those of the United States or Great Britain.

The U. S. S. R. is a corporate body and the sovereignty of the people is fully vindicated in that the collective

will of the people is effectively expressed in the threefold aspect of man.

The Constitution allows full scope for the expression of public opinion on every phase of life through these innumerable voluntary associations.

State and Finance. The State is maintained out of the surplus or profits realised from industries. Balancing of budget implies the balancing of income and expenditure of every member, every department of state and every family.

The constitution is criticised from the following stand-points:

(a) *Individual freedom is curtailed:* There is no doubt that the Soviet Society, shuns those who live by mere ownership. Functionless man is certainly out of place in any good society especially in a Socialist State. In Russia he is heavily taxed and prevented from excercising his franchise and is not even admitted as a member of any association.

(b) *Private enterprises are not allowed scope for their development:* All private enterprises are controlled by the state and they are encouraged if they do not seek profit; but any concern with profit-getting motive behind it is put down with a high hand.

(c) *The Government is intolerantly autocratic:* It is true in this sense. It is vehemently watchful of the least approach to what it seems to be counter-revolution in speech or writing. The excuse for this repression, by the defenders of the revolution is this. They say they are like soldiers with fixed bayonets guarding the bridges and factories. This tendency on their part, in the opinion of Mr. and Mrs. Webb, is the outcome of war mentality.

To put it plainly it is the outcome of a fear of attack by the surrounding States which are opposed to the Communist State; but it is said that "thinkers and writers" do not complain against this kind of repression.

(d) *The President of the Soviet State, is an autocrat.* He wields no doubt extraordinary powers, in the same way as the President of the United States does; but the President of the Soviet State in a real sense is only a spokesman of the nation like the President of the United States.

The religious orders are not allowed to participate in the affairs of State. The reason assigned is that Communists dislike theology and the persecutions to which they were subject to in the beginning were given up.

The Soviet State now allows religion to function as "the keeper of the national conscience." This is exactly what August Comte thought a century ago. Religion according to him should exercise authority of persuasion. The Soviet believes that it has presented the world a Constitution, which is a practicable alternative, which comes to the attainment of the Jefferson object--"the Government of the people, by the people and for the people."

The following have contributed largely for the emancipation of Russia from the old order. These are (1) The State Publishing House, (2) Education (3) Women's freedom and (4) Family and rural social life.

(1) *The State Publishing House.* It was founded in Moscow in 1919. During 1932 it sold 600,000,000 copies of which nearly 40,000 were newly published books and pamphlets. These figures relate to Russia proper. Each of the Federal Republics has also its own publishing centres. The Trade Unions, the Consumer's Co-operative Societies, the Red Army and the larger factories publish their own mass of literature at many different centres. The Minister for Education has a separate publishing organisation for the publication of the scientific books. Literature on all departments of life has vastly increased.

The object of the State Publishing House, is to bring to every family in the land in the several mother tongues by means of cheap editions, every kind

of book deemed necessary for their culture. Publications are issued in more than fifty different languages.

There are large numbers of translations from German, English, French and Italian and of scientific, technological works, works on fiction, drama, history and poetry. The output of works on music, old and new, by composers of all countries is considerable.

Distributing Centres :—The Central Publishing House has more than 1,000 distributing centres. The Railway bookstalls, co-operative societies (there are 45,000 societies which also deal in books), every educational institution, every club, every Trade Union branch, Leagues of Youth, (numbering 70,000) and other organizations—each of them places orders with cash, for the books or other publications required for their use. Further there are literally many tens of thousands of permanent libraries in the U. S. S. R. of a public character and each of them is in possession of funds for the purchases of new books. No sooner a new book is announced in the current issue of the catalogue than orders pour in from these libraries. Even large editions go out of print in a short time. Professors and others run the risk of hearing that copies have been sold. This sudden demand for books is unparalleled in the history of the world.

SAVE THE YOUNG OFFENDER!

TURN HIS LIFE FROM CHANNELS OF CRIME

(*The following article was contributed to the " News of the World " by Lord Hewart, Lord Chief Justice of England. He touches one of the burning problems of our day viz. the after-life of the young offender. Lord Hewart, with his unique knowledge of human weaknesses has discussed the problem of the juvenile offender, especially in the light of the laws in England relating to this question. But the general views are of interest to any country which hopes to usher a spirit of reason in its life-Ed.*)

Gone for ever, it may be hoped, are the days when those who had to pass "sentence according to law" could send to long terms of imprisonment or transportation small boys or girls who committed a petty theft.

Gone for ever, it may be hoped, are the days when an experienced warder in a big London prison could say of youthful offenders as they left his hands: "They come in weeping, they go out laughing."

It is common enough, especially for persons in what are called comfortable circumstances, to express regret that we cannot go back to the "good old days."

It might be good for some of those who indulge in these lamentations, because they have abandoned faith in progress, to reflect upon the changes that have been made in the last 100 years in the treatment provided by the State for the young offender.

It used to be the practice to treat young offenders upon the same footing with adult criminals. Boys and girls were subjected to the same punishment as that which awaited the "old lag," including appalling sentences

of transportation for long terms passed upon mere children for trivial offences. The effect of imprisonment upon them was too often, either to break their spirit or to send them out into the world hardened and embittered rebels.

The Reformatory School Act, 1854, made it possible for Courts to send to School instead of gaol, children between the ages of 12 and 16, found guilty of acts punishable by imprisonment.

But for many years it remained the practice to sentence such young offenders to a period of imprisonment before they entered the reformatory.

The purpose of this preliminary period of imprisonment was, apparently, to prevent the impression from spreading among young people that their cases would be regarded with undue leniency. At the present time it is recognised on all sides that the State is under a special obligation of *care* toward young offenders. "The State may sometimes be compelled to be stern. It must not be cruel. It cannot afford to be indifferent."

The Citizens Of To-morrow

This new attitude is dictated not by sentimentalism, but by the interests of the State itself.

These young people are some of the citizens of the future. If they are correctly and skilfully dealt with, if their minds and energies are at an early stage directed in proper channels, they may become useful servants of the State.

If, on the other hand, so early in their lives they are contaminated by surroundings of crime, hostility, and rigour, the State may later have to pay for its neglect.

Society, as we are slowly discovering, does not consist of classes, but only of individuals.

The State stands to gain if the juvenile offender is given a fair chance of mending his ways and leading a life of happiness and usefulness.

There are obvious reasons why the young offender should receive special treatment. While an offender is still young, there is a greater possibility of reforming him. His mind is open to instruction, and his character may be influenced by sympathetic and friendly care. An offender's youth is rightly regarded as a circumstance in his favour.

Because he is young, it may be that he has had little opportunity of learning the difference between right and wrong. He may have acted in mere mischief or ignorance in doing that which an older person would have done only with deliberation and wicked motive.

If the lad has been brought up in a bad home, what chance can he be said to have had of learning the rules of conduct that he has transgressed? And if he has been unemployed, and every opportunity has been afforded to him—through no fault of his own—to do wrong, who would deny that those circumstances should be taken into consideration by a Court?

Is it not right to remember, also, that the young offender suffers from greater sensitiveness and fear than are to be found in the older criminal?

The respect that all British citizens have for the policeman is surpassed by the awe which that invaluable officer inspires in very young persons.

Arrest, detention, appearance in court, and sentence are the more alarming for the juvenile offender for the reason that he may not understand what it all means.

Because he fears the Court, he tends to believe that it is hostile towards him. He may even have the frustrated sense of being confronted by a bully who is outside his reach, and whose methods he cannot understand.

It Depends Upon Company

More than that, young people are readily influenced by the company

they keep.

The precept that "little boys should be seen and not heard" suggests the view that their time can best be occupied in observing and learning to copy the precise and model behaviour of respectable elders.

Children, it is true, easily learn to imitate. So, if a lad keeps the company of rogues and criminals, either in or out of prison, he will tend to copy their conduct and outlook, and may one day become their instrument.

We owe something to all minors; we owe a great deal to the children without a chance.

Mere leniency is not the aim. The State is not to assume an attitude that is grandmotherly, but it may well be paternal. Cannot the offender be made to understand that the desire of those who are in authority is to help him and not merely to scold him?

Yet it is folly to conceal from him that he has done wrong merely because it is desired to teach him in future to do right.

The importance of careful and competent dealing with juvenile offenders is illustrated by the undoubted fact that an enormous proportion of those who have become hardened criminals were arraigned for their first offence before the age of 16. There is cause for misgiving in that established fact. Each of those persons offers an instance of the failure of the State to do its duty to itself and to the delinquent.

In each of these cases, it may be said, it *ought* to have been possible to cure the criminal tendencies in the offender while he was still young. The profound importance of the treatment of the juvenile offender consists largely in this, that if he is carelessly dealt with he will probably develop in time into a hardened and practised rogue.

Pointing the Ideal

In recent years the number of offenders brought before Juvenile Courts has increased.

Everybody knows from experience that, unless the matter is properly handled, these young people are potential criminals who will get themselves and other people into trouble. What is to be done with them?

In the "good old days," which some desiderate, it was thought that the best way of keeping any person out of mischief was to make him afraid of the consequences.

As it was likely enough that nobody would notice that the stolen jam-tart was missing, it was thought well to remind the potential offender of the existence of an unpleasant place where little boys who told lies and stole would inevitably go.

To-day the better practice is to point the child to a higher ideal—to a better reason why he should be clean and honest.

The practice of the Juvenile Court is to search slowly rather than birch quickly.

The Court tries to discover the early trouble and difficulties which have resulted in the offence being committed, and to determine, in view of all the circumstances, what is the best way of dealing with the offender.

The police are often in a position to help with information.

Education authorities and probation officers alike help the Court in the study which must be made of the offender's record and surroundings before the correct way of dealing with him can be determined.

Indeed, there have recently been established "Child guidance clinics" which enable probation officers to study the condition of the culprit.

Homes of Observation

At one time the work of a Court concerned with juvenile offenders consisted merely in an examination of the crime and the passing of sentence.

To-day an effort is made to obtain

a careful diagnosis of the case, and it is the practice, therefore, in certain cases, to detain the offender for a short time, after his first appearance in court, in order that inquiries may be made.

For this purpose the local authority provide what is called a "remand home," and the period of detention in the "remand home" is used for the observation of the young person's character.

There is no need to point the contrast between the old indifference and the "remand homes" and "observation centres" of to-day.

If anybody doubts the importance of Juvenile Courts, he may be reminded that in a single year no fewer than 25,000 cases are brought before these courts in England and Wales.

Here it is often determined how the career of a young person shall develop, and a golden opportunity is offered to divert the offender from a career of crime.

The public owes much to the justices who sit in these courts.

It is a commonplace to say that the panel should consist of persons who know and understand children and that they should be persons who do not, from misplaced sympathy, yield too readily to tearful appeal.

But the foundation of the whole new method of dealing with young offenders is the excellent system of probation.

The probation officers belong to that large class of diligent and faithful public servants whose names remain for the most part unknown, though the fruits of their labour live long after them.

In a single year they have to do with nearly 20,000 offenders.

If a similar number of persons were sent to prison every year, the cost would be at least twenty times as great.

Not only is the State saved expense —an important though a minor consideration—but the offender is relieved of the stigma of prison and the risk of contamination from undesirable associates.

Improvements in the Law

That admirable method or system, first recognised by the Summary Jurisdiction Act, 1879, continued by the probation of First Offenders Act, 1887, and developed by the Youthful Offenders Act, 1901, has been consolidated and extended by the Probation Act, 1907, and further improved more recently in the case of certain offences.

The first section of the Act of 1907 provides that where any person is charged before a court of summary jurisdiction with an offence punishable by that Court, and the Court thinks that the charge is proved, but is of opinion that, having regard to the character, antecedents, age, health, or mental condition of the person charged, or to the trivial nature of the offence, or to the extenuating circumstances under which the offence was committed, it is inexpedient to inflict any punishment or any other than a nomit nal punishment, or that it is expedient to release the offender on probation, the Court may, without proceeding on conviction make an order either.

(1) dismissing the information or charge, or

(2) discharging the offender conditionally on his entering into a recognisance, with or without sureties, to be of good behaviour and to appear for conviction and sentence when called on at any time during such period, not exceeding three years, as may be specified in the order.

Now these are very remarkable and far-reaching powers, and the next subsection proceeds to confer them, with such minor changes as are necessary, upon Courts before whom any person has been convicted on indictment of any offence punishable with imprisonment.

It may be doubted whether the full meaning of this provision has been

universally, or even usually, appreciated and turned to account.

Questions for the Courts

Wide indeed is the range of the several and alternative matters which the legislature has deliberately invited the Court to consider for the purposes of the Act—with regard to the defendant himself, (1) his character, (2) his antecedents, (3) his age, (4) his health, or (5) his mental condition; or, with regard to the offence charged, the question whether it was or was not really of a trivial nature; or finally, any extenuation to be found in the circumstances in which the offence was committed.

Section III. of the Act provides for the appointment of probation officers, and also of special probation officers called children's probation officers, and Section IV. describes in detail the duties which the probation officer is to discharge.

It is his duty, subject to the directions of the Court,

(a) To visit or receive reports from the person under supervision at such reasonable intervals as may be specified in the probation order, or, subject thereto, as the probation officer may think fit;

(b) to see that he observes the conditions of his recognisances;

(c) To report to the Court as to his behaviour;

(d) To advise, assist, and befriend him, and, when necessary, to endeavour to find him suitable employment.

It seems useful to direct the most careful attention to the provisions of this Statute. It is not necessary to explain or to enlarge upon them. They speak for themselves.

But unless and until those provisions, which did not become law yesterday or the day before yesterday, have been loyally, sincerely, diligently, and vigilantly applied, what nonsense, and what mischievous nonsense, it is to deplore, for example, the painful necessity, which does not exist, of sending youthful offenders to prison for trivial offences.

Equipment For Life

Yet it is to be remembered that probation may be misused. It is admittedly an experimental service.

If once or twice it has failed, and at the end of the second attempt to help him the offender resorts once more to crime, it may be thought that there is little to be said for prolonging the probation treatment.

Sometimes in the case of a young offender it is clear that his home surroundings are so unsatisfactory as to neutralise the good effects of the probation officer's work.

In such cases it may be that committal to a Home Office School is the best course.

These institutions serve as admirable residential schools for children, who have not had a fair chance at home.

In many of the schools the children may spend the happiest part of their lives.

They receive useful training of different kinds. The visitor discovers groups of boys hammering away in the carpenter's shop, sewing in the tailoring class, going out, it may even be, to work upon the fields.

Borstal now provides to the adolescent offender not prison discipline and prison methods, but a system whose basis is mainly educational.

It is clear that the whole tendency in the treatment of the young offender is to-day towards helping instead of frightening and embittering him.

Finally, it is well to remember that so far as statesmen may be successful in helping to provide more employment, better houses, and better education, the number of young offenders may be expected to diminish.

Desperation and hunger too often contain the explanation of crime.

Raise the standard of life, and, although you may not eliminate crime among young people, you will undoubtedly diminish it.

THE RELATION OF LITERATURE TO DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM

By **Ralph Fox**

(*Being the second lecture in the series "Aspects of Dialectic materialism delivered before the Society for cultural Relations"*)

Literature has always been considered as one of the most ideal of human activities, the product of the creative imagination at work in a world of its own fashioning. Yet we have met to discuss historical materialism in its relation to literature—that is to say, we are anxious to discover if there is any relation between this ideal world of the imagination and the bitter struggle of classes which is shaking our society.

In an earlier lecture a professor of philosophy gave you his views on the philosophy of Dialectical Materialism. Professor Macmurray's aim was to bring you to the conclusion that this philosophy, as he understood it, bore no relation to the practical life which gave it birth, to the movement of the revolutionary working class. Professor Macmurray tried to persuade you that the philosophy of the revolutionary working class in its struggle against capitalism for a new society, for a new world, is actually the reverse of what it appears. He wished you to believe that it is, in fact, the reactionary philosophy of dying capitalism in its struggle against the working class for the maintenance of our present class society, based on the exploitation of human labour. In short, he tried to convince you that revolutionary materialism is in fact the philosophy of Fascism.

Now, I think it is not too much to assume that we are discussing these questions because our lives are at the present moment profoundly disturbed by two things :—

First, by the fact that we are living in the midst of a terrible crisis of the social system in which we were born, whose traditions we have largely inherited, and which to a great extent has shaped our consciousness. This crisis is expressed in a collapse of the economy of that system, in ghastly wars and violent revolutionary outbreaks.

Secondly, this social system is now no longer the only existing social system. Alongside of it, over a vast area in another part of the world, a new society has come to birth. In the Soviet Union the productive and social relations to which we are accustomed have been violently changed by the action of the working class. What Marx, as a result of his analysis of society, foretold—the collapse of capitalism and its revolutionary replacement by Socialism—has begun in that country. I think it is important to emphasize that the socialist society growing up in the U.S.S.R. is the revolutionary creation of the working class, not the abstract "experiment" of a dictatorship of the chosen few in horn-rimmed spectacles, after the Wells-ian manner. Hundreds of thousands of fitters, foundry-men, turners, locomotive drivers, miners, tram-conductors, agricultural labourers, simple shepherds, have made this revolution, and are building the new society, filling its leading places.

In fact, it might be interesting to mention here three of my acquaintances who can each claim something in the creation of the new literary theory of Socialism, and who are them-

selves excellent examples of this. The theoretical leader and organizer of the literary forces of the U. S. S. R. is the young director of the Institute of Philosophy in the Communist Academy, Paul Yudin, a Communist. He is by origin a turner in a railway machine shop, became a soldier in the Red Army, and is now a professional philosopher, literary critic, and an Arctic explorer, as well as an active member of the Moscow Committee of the Communist Party. He represents, we must admit, a quite different type of philosopher from Professor Macmurray. Two men who have done a great deal to interpret the ideas of Marx and Engels on the relations between life and literature are Franz Schiller, a shepherd boy from the German Volga Republic who lost all his family in the famine of 1921, now a professsor of literature, and Lifshitz, a member of the Young Communist League, and once a vagabond boy of the kind you all know from the film " The Road to Life." I mention these things because they have a very direct bearing on these remarks upon the relations between literature and life, because I consider that ours is no academic discussion.

Professor Macmurray—so deep is the misunderstanding of the issues which he betrayed in his lecture—tried to make you believe that we are in fact discussing an academic question. If I may say so, he put the issue to you as though you were being offered a free choice of dishes, of which one smelled badly and tasted good, and the other tasted badly but smelled deliciously, their misguided chefs having christened their concoctions respectively Communism and Fascism. Communism, according to the professor, has no scientific answer to Fascism, and the speeches of Hitler, forsooth, are based on " Marxian analysis." But the whole vast work of Marx is significant only precisely because it is an analysis of capitalism and of its development and decay. This work, continued and developed in our own day by Lenin and Stalin, is a scientific analysis of capitalism and of its political and ideal superstructure. And what else is Fascism but the latest, most decadent, and final development of that superstructure, the political organization of social decay?

You must excuse what may seem to you a digression from my subject, but I must emphasize as strongly as I can that our discussion cannot be a dilettante one. We cannot pick and choose for ourselves from a number of rival systems, as though we were in a twopenny lending library. Our discussion is taking place because the very realities of our own life are forcing us to enamine the bases of that life, forcing us on to one side or the other in the gigantic battle in which humanity is now solving its problems. That great historical struggle is not a battle between abstract ideas, but a struggle between two worlds—the world of dying capitalism and the young and vigorous world of Socialism for which the working class is fighting. This struggle can have only one end—the complete abolition of private property in the means of production and of the exploitation of man by man, nation by nation, the complete abolition of classes and class society, and the construction in its place of a world society without classes, a communist society. In the course of this struggle man is emerging from his pre-history, of which capitalism is the closing stage.

Now, these reflections have a great deal to do with the present subject. For literature, of all the so-called spiritual or imaginative activities, deals most directly with man and everyday human activities—with human personality as such. In the great conflict in which we are all compelled to take part we are dealing with nothing more nor less than the changing of the character of man, by making man free for the first time in his history,

by endowing him, in the course of this struggle, with the consciousness of the necessity to destroy the class society in which he lives at present. In this struggle he is becoming imbued with the consciousness that class society is an intolerable fetter on his development, that he must build a new society wherein he can develop without the burdens, humiliations, and limitations imposed upon him by the private property basis of capitalist society. I will close this introductory part by asking your pardon again for what may seem to you a digression. Yet I think it is impossible for us to approach this particular problem of the relation between literature and life unless we have first cleared the ground of any suspicion that we are here approaching an abstract question, or toying with some new fashionable idea.

Marx has summed up the whole of his views on the question which interests us in a certain famous and masterly passage of the Preface to his *Critique of Political Economy*. I will quote it at some length.

"The mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political, and spiritual processes of life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but, on the contrary, their social existence determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of their development, the material forces of production in society become in conflict with the existing relations of production, or—what is but a legal expression for the same thing—with the property relations with in which they had been at work before. From forms of development of the forces of production these relations turn into their fetters. Then comes the period of social revolution. With the change of the economic foundation the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed. In considering such transformations the distinction should always be between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, æsthetic, or philosophic—in short, ideological forms—in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out."

You will agree, I think, that what I have just quoted is full of meaning for the understanding of our whole life to-day, when we are going through just such a period of social revolution. Marx, then, starting from the position that it is the social existence of men which determines their consciousness, declares that spiritual life is determined in its character by the mode of production in material life. And by "mode of production" Marx meant the way in which labour and the means of production are united in order to produce. In our modern capitalist society that unification is carried out in the following way: The means of production, the land, factories, transport system, banks, are in the hands of a class of property-owners; the mass of the people is deprived of all property save its power to labour, which it is compelled to sell to those who control the means of production. It is this method of production---the bourgeois method—which, according to Marx, determines our social, political, and spiritual processes of life. Now, it is easy to see how law or morals can be determined by a particular social system; but with art and literature it is by no means so simple a matter. Marx fully understood that these activities of the human mind are of a peculiarly refined and delicate character, and that it is quite impossible to relate them crudely and directly to an economic basis. Between the mode of production, the union of man and the means of production, and those spiritual processes which are at the very summit of society's superstructure, the distance is great and the path hard to trace, and the more class society develops, the more tremendous the growth in the material

forces of society, the more tenuous the connection appears. But Marx never claimed more than that the economic factor, the mode of production, gave the primary impulse. Between that and the finished product of the imagination there is a great distance, so that at first glance it often appears impossible to trace any connection between, for example, an ode of Keats and the storms of the French revolution and the transition to industrialism in England. Did we not know from Keats's own life how profoundly he was affected spiritually by these events, we might be persuaded to abandon the search altogether.

Yet a short examination of the process of creation itself will prove to us that Marx must be right. Art is only a means—one of the highest means—by which man grapples with and assimilates reality. On the forge of his own inner consciousness the the writer hammers out reality, beats it out madly by the violences of thought, if I may steal a phrase from Naomi Mitchison. The whole process of creation, the whole agony of the artist, is in this violent conflict with reality, in his effort to give life to his own perceptions, to force his experience on to others, so that they may live through it emotionally as he has done. But his whole work of creation is a battle with the life, the reality, which is reflected in his own consciousness. In accordance with the strength, the mastery he shows, the deeper, the sharper, the more vital the perception of life which he is able to transmit. Indeed, the result often appears as the creation of a separate world because of this very fact. The great characters of literature —the Hamlets, the Don Quixotes, the Tom Joneses—seem to live a life of their own, independent of time and space. But the artist has given us nothing of his own, only what he has torn away from life, impelled by the strength of some experience which he transmits to us. The greater the are the more permanent it appears, the more splendid the reflection of life, of reality.

And in order to understand how art expresses life, we must understand the mechanism of life itself. But in the life of civilized peoples it is the class struggle which is the mainspring of that mechanism. It is for this reason that we say that the literary works of any period express definite class interests; and how they do so, in what way they are related to the struggles of their time, it is the business of criticism to reveal. Of course, because they deal with human passions, human emotions, with the experiences of flesh and blood, works of art have a value for all time, a meaning for all time; though that value and that meaning change in accordance with the changes in our own consciousness, which in turn are determined by the development of the class struggle in society. Perhaps the most perfect analysis of any great writer from this point of view, the most perfect relating of great creative work to the class struggles of a definite period, is that made by Lenin of Tolstoy:—

"The contradictions in the works, views, and teachings of the Tolstoyan school are really glaring contradictions.

"On the one hand we have the gifted writer who is not only able to draw an incomparable picture of Russian life, but is able to produce first-class world literature. On the other hand we have the landowners wearing the martyr's crown in the name of Christ.

"On the one hand, a remarkably strong, direct, and sincere protest against social lies and hypocrisies. On the other hand, the 'Tolstoyan'—*i. e.*,

the exhausted, hysterical, misery-mongering Russian intellectual, who, publicly beating his breast, cries: 'I am bad, I am vile, but I am striving for moral perfection; I no longer eat meat, but live on rice cutlets!'

(*To be Concluded in the Next Issue*).

THE PEASANT & SOVIET AGRICULTURE

By **K. Rangachari**

Petite culture which was ended in Britain by a process of enclosure spread over a century has been ended in Russia by collectivisation in 5 years. 18 million odd of peasant households have submitted to the abrogation of their personal rights in the land and its cultivation and have become workers on behalf of cultivating societies of which they are members. Co-operative cultivation on a considerable scale has been undertaken before, by people choosing their own partners in the work. But a transformation on this nation-wide scale along with the obligation to accept all comers of the neighbourhood in the cultivating partnership—it beggars all epithets.

How was it brought about? Not of course by the initiative of the people themselves. But are we to endorse the theory that mere crude compulsion by a ruthless clique of doctrinaires brought the peasant so gifted with the faculty of passive resistance into the acceptance of a way of a life alien to his habits and contrary to his desires? Those who think thus can quote a hundred passages from the peasant literature of Russia insisting on the jealous individualism of the class: and it is, of course, true that the commune which was universal in Great Russian villages up to the end of the 19th century involved little joint labour and no common income to school the peasantry into the ways of the Bolshevist collective.

To solve the problem we must first examine the conditions prevailing in South Russia at the moment when Stalin made his, memorable announcement of the 'year' of great change, which inaugurated the active policy collectivisation in 1929. Let us put out of our minds the fanciful picture of a people of yeoman formers having secure possession and dealing freely each with his own separate farm. Under the auspices of a minister who might have postponed the fate of the Tsardom, if the Tsardom had been able to distinguish friend from foe, something had been done to consolidate the scattered strips of the peasant holdings to put an end to redistributions of land and to create a body of peasant proprietors. The Revolution swept away along with the landlords this incohate yeomanry.

The disorder of the early days which secured some advantage in the scramble for land to the locally influential and well-to-do was succeeded by a period of frequent redistributions of land under the control of revolutionary authority always having as their general object an equalisation of rights within the village. But the equal distribution of land when the instruments of cultivation remain unequal is a contradiction in terms and the effect of the N. E. P. pursued after 1921 with the partial freedom of trade which it permitted was to encourage the aggrandisement of those who knew how to benefit by the freedom. In 1928 Russia was a country without

landlords but with great inequalities within the village and many poor and even landless peasants who clung to common right of pasturage and wood, and hoped for further redistributions.

The immemorial evil of the division of holdings into numerous strips too narrow for the plough to turn at the ends, wasting land with innumerable boundaries and involving long journeys to reach one part of the farm from another was still general. Except in 8 or 9 per cent of the land the ancient three-field rotation prevailed and no one could break away from it without interfering with the passage of the cattle over the stubbles and coming into collision with his fellow right-holders and the village authority. The ancient trouble of the horseless household which is the subject of one of Ghleb Uspersky's sketches in the seventies persisted and 1/3 of the peasants had no horse to help them through the bitter toil of ploughing and harvesting. The necessary hiring of animals and implements from more well-to-do peasants was one of the causes as well as one of the results of inequality and oppression within the village.

When the Bolshevik Government decided that it was necessary to industrialise the country and to increase the production of food for this purpose it had to choose between two methods. One was the freedom of internal trade in food products, accumulating the small surpluses of individual peasants into a large marketable aggregate, and involving the support of the larger farmer whose surplus is the more considerable and of the merchant who deals in the product. The other was to compromise between the possible social advantages of petite culture and the certain economic advantages of large estates of organising the peasant holders into cultivating societies capable of using improved instruments on their joint holdings. The first method being unacceptable to a Government with Socialist aims as tending to the creation of a class using hired labour and living by profit, there remained two ways of giving effect to the second.

There were terrible losses of horses, of large horned cattle and of smaller stock due in part to deliberate hostility to the plan of socialising animals, and in part to a native assumption that as the Government was going to be form collective farms it would find the necessary stock to equip them. This holocaust of animal life was the severest blow which had been dealt to the Bolshevist Government since the Civil War, and rural economy in spite of the additions to trade or power has hardly yet begun to recover from it. Evidently there were some persons who had much to lose by the process of collectivisation. They owned more than the others, and the pooling of land and of property and the termination of their opportunities, for putting their superior qualities to profitable use meant ruin for them... But, for the great bulk of the peasants there was no need of compulsion for they stood to gain by pooling.

If kicking was needed, it was kicking in which the majority helped to kick and enjoyed the process. The ousted 'kulak' (a word which may be defined as meaning any unpopular person who has made money in a village) was not necessarily a better agriculturist than the rest though he was certainly a better man of business.

The great change could not have been effected without the driving force of the Communist Party now represented in each collective farm by the chairman of the Managing Board... It has always been the avowed intention of the Bolsheviks to establish a hegemony of the proletariat over the village and to bring the town as a civilising element to the country and the Communist chairman is the symbol and guarantee of success in this aim.

Taxation is somewhat heavier than under the British Indian Land revenue system, and it has two notable peculiarities. With the exception of a small cash import, which is trifling in the case of Collective Farms, it is taxation in kind, so much grain or rice or sunflower or meat or milk; and this is not a fractional share of the product but a fixed quantity per unit of area or of stock varying in different localities according to conditions. It follows that the taxation-regarded as a fraction of the whole product is heavier for a poor crop, lighter for a good one. The last three harvests since taxation took its latest form have been good, and it may be that we should await a cycle of lean years before drawing inferences from present appearances.

The question naturally suggests itself whether what has been achieved is complete collectivisation, and the answer is 'No'. In nearly 98 per cent of the collectives, most of the land and stock are held in common and most of the labour is joint, but the produce after providing for the Government tax and certain other matters is divided among the members on a system which discriminates according to the amount and value of their work. The method of calculating the dividend is determined by the village meeting in which claims and grievances are debated very much, and the extent to which the Communist Chairman of the Committee gets his own way depends upon his character and the respect he commands.

What stands firm amid all this is the determination that there shall be no exploitation of man—or of woman—by man. The rules against the employment by collective farms of hired labour are strict. All work must be done by the members themselves.

The possibility of these collectivist corporations becoming exploiters and tyrants in their turn has not been overlooked. It is to prevent such things that those custodians, the Communist Chairman are installed, that village correspondents are encouraged to write to the press, that in the last resort, the party holds in reserve its terrible remedies of the purge and of exile.

The regime of the Collective Farm, of which the woman is as full a member as the man, offers a release from the conditions of ignorance prevailing before. She now takes her place in the village meeting, she draws her dividend along with the rest for the work she has done. There are still certain persistent survivals of ancient tradition. For example, the women alone do the weeding in the field while the men supervise. Also where an urban working women gets two months' rest before and two months' after child birth on full pay, the woman of a collective gets one month before and one month after on half the average pay.

For good or evil, collectivisation has come to stay, if for no better reason than that a reversion to primitive implements and to the bitter bodily toil of the ancient peasant life has become inconceivable. The town has been brought to the country. Workers' dress, sports, clubs, habits spread through the Communist elements in the collectives into the villages. Workmen go in motor lorries, and enjoy electric lighting in farm buildings. No longer does the man weave the brick-bark sandals, and the woman spin, weave and make clothes. It is one of the statutory obligations of the collective farmers to relieve women of domestic work as for as possible and see that that they are employed on the more important farm work. There is an extension of the cash nexus into spheres new to Russia. Work and leisure are spread out over the year. Illiteracy is less general, and the newspaper makes its appearance with the strange new jargons of Communist slogans.

WHITE VERSUS COLOURED RACES

THE NEXT INTERNATIONAL WARFARE

By **A. G. Venkatachary B. A.**

Patriotic Hysteria

Mussolini and Hitler ever since they captured power have conceived and ruthlessly pursued a policy of irritant and aggressive nationalism which has led in the case of the former and tending to in the case of the latter to the only inevitable goal—war. Diplomacy, propaganda and patriotic hysteria and the whole gamut of the underworld forces have been brought in to subserve these ends. Both of them being renegades from the Socialist movement they had fully realised that the mobilised power of the workers was quite capable of maintaining democratic freedom and as long as the labour movements were allowed free play the workers would never fail in their efforts to secure economic justice. While Mussolini did not in theory obliterate workers' organisations, Hitler, prompted by the Duce's failures struck at the root of the working-class movement to entrench himself in power. The former played the role of a Social-Chauvinist while the latter undisguisedly became an opportunist of the front rank.

Lenin has stated unequivocally: "The economic basis of opportunism and social-chauvinism is the same—the interests of an insignificant layer of privileged workers and petty bourgeoisie who are defending their privileged positions, their "right" to the crumbs of profits which their national bourgeoisie receives from robbing other nations, from the advantages of its position as a great nation.

The ideological and political content of opportunism and social-chauvinism is the same—class collaboration instead of class-struggle."

Militarism

Thus, both have been continuously playing, promising a millennium round the corner, but all along, thoroughly conscious of the slender foundations of their authority. They have scrupulously side-tracked the people and imbued the impressionable part of the populace with the spirit of militarism—a "condition in which the armed forces are allowed to be the ruling factor in the State, independent of the Civil Government, with political aims and ideals of their own."*

A Dinner a Week

It has been established beyond doubt that Italian Fascism grown utterly bankrupt is now engaged to satisfy the capricious whims of a dictator, who to save himself from historical extinction is fighting now with his back to the wall, in a last and desperate effort to galvanise a whole nation into following unquestioningly his path of victory or death. In Italy, the following rhyme is said to be circulating:

"Quando si salutaua ancora cosi, Si mangiava ogni di. Dacche Si saluta alla romana. Si manjica una volta la settimana." (When the raising of hats was the fashion, A dinner a day then

* E. A. Mourer, in "Germany Puts the clock Back."

we got: The Roman salute changed a lot—Now a dinner a week is our ration.")

The Italian people are quite aware of the connection between Fascism and famine. But they have to 'join up' lest they should become merciless-victims of the Blackshirts,—the privileged army whose sole purpose is to' maintain the Duce in power. Mussolini sends the flower of Italian manhood to the East African slaughter-house to prevent or delay if possible his seemingly speedy downfall. He may cauterize the existing sores; but he knows that the virus, if uneliminated is sure to hasten his downfall. If there is victory, Fascism can have a further triumphant lease of life; if not. there will be no more millions of unemployed youth, no more recruiting grounds for mass uprising, in short no more possible threats to his very existence. A whole nation of invalids and cripples would be mere clay in his hands.

German Menace.

The case of Germany is generally, if not wholly similar. The barbarous and criminal Dictated Peace signed at Versaillees in 1918, forced down the throats of the patriotic Germans terms highly humiliating to their national self-respect and spelling utter disaster to their future well-being. In the post-war years, every effort was made by the victors to cripple and dismember the German nation. These were, more, than anything else, responsible for a Social Democratic Germany based on the ideal Weimar Constitution to transfer its allegiance to a powerful demagogue, who successfully spread his ramifications that led to the establishment of his Fascist rule. He was able to show with justice that Europe would listen to no argument but force. And so Germany began to rearm secretly under the new regime. The Allied Powers knew but could not prevent the rearming. On the other hand, Britain was content to secure her position by entering into the now-famous Naval Agreement with Germany; for, Germany is ever a powerful menace to British industrialists.

Arms! Arms!

Hitler has carried Germany's rearmament to such a pitch of perfection that no one would mistake his recent speech at Munich for a stage-thunder. He declared that Germany henceforth stood in need of no alliances and treaties; that there was no need for any help from the League, but that she rested solely on her military power—on the bigger and better battleships, bigger and more highly mechanised army based on conscription, an air-force bigger and more efficient than that of any other nation. He did not stop there. It took Mussolini nearly twelve years to complete his preparations for the African adventure and demands 'a place under the sun' for Italy. Hitler has sooner realised that colonies will soon become vital to the very existence of his authority.

Sans Hitler.

The reasons are not far to seek. He wants to stave off internal discontent by raising the colonial demand. For, the extent of opposition to the Nazi Dictatorship can be gauged from the new decree promulgated on the 30th of January last. This decree gave the German Army enormous powers to put down any sort of resistance whatsoever to the Nazi authorities. "Any disturbance which is impeding the fulfilment of its functions" will be visited down upon by the Army. So he has sounded a note of warning. His propagandist minister very recently stated that the time will soon come when Germany will demand colonies. A country frustrated in its efforts at expansion, he said, would be forced to go Italy's way.

Colour vs. White

More recently on the 27th January addressing the young Nazis, Hitler

taking a leaf from his Italian brother, denounced the coloured races as only fit to be ruled by the Whites, who by their heroic concept of life (according to him) were destined to rule. The opportunist that he is, he chastises Mussolini for qualifying his Abyssinian venture with the apology of a civilising mission and advocates no such 'weak and liberal policy' to be pursued by the white rulers in their colonies. If that is done, he asserts, they would turn round and throw off their yoke. In short, Hitler has made a bold bid for colonies. Presumably he is developing the idea propounded by Sir Samuel Hoare in his famous League speech—the division of world's colonies among nations whose need for expansion was recognised. Of course, Japan was off Sir Samuel's mind when he spoke that. Hitler has gone a step further and gives a few tips to Anglo-Saxon and Latin Imperialists not to loosen their stranglehold on the colonies. It is clear that his claims for colonies may not be easily conceded by the Imperialist countries whose prized possessions they now are. So, he offers them a bait—a suggestingly tempting offer—to place his great armed strength at thir disposal for putting down with all the characteristic ruthlessness of the Nazis, all movements for colonial independence in any part of the world. One cannot guess what the gesture of these Powers will be to this scheme of division of spoils. But if he is thwarted in his ambitions, it is most certain that Hitler would set Europe and the world aflame and the result will be a gigantic holocaust whose possible ravages defy every imagination.

A Challenge to the World.

Hilter's speech at Munich is a challenge to the coloured people of the world and a warning to the whites. The Fascist dictators of Italy and Germany have proved to the hilt that their creed is the very negation of Democracy. They now openly advocate what logically follows in its trail the suppression of the liberties of nations. They advocate and applaud methods of force as the only solutions for difficulties.

Down with the Gangsters.

It is a great tragedy of history that Germany and Italy which had risen to high cultural levels should now commit in its name acts of atrocity that fill the world with horror. Having filled their countries with millions of unemployed, and under-employed, hopelessness, misery and despair mounting in volume, the urlers of these states are now unscrupulously endeavouring to tamper with the rights and liberties of even the outside world. All lovers of freedom, be they white or coloured, must be roused into activity against these Fascist war-lords and other imperialist countries who by their evidently silent glee, only encourage these subterfuges. The world has a preponderant majority of coloured people and there are many among the whites who are impervious to these insane outbursts. All these should strive against the new danger to world peace by the neo-Fascist creed—race hatred by voice, by pen, by organisation, by education and by any appropriate economic and political action. This rule of force against reason, the Iron Hand against Human Will, must meet with un-remitting opposition. All people with any sense of humanity any justice must be seized with a righteous indignation and must help to start new forces that would one day sweep away all the flood of injustice, blood and shame, let loose by Fascist and Imperialist gangsters. There are no doubt obstacles in the way of those striking for freedom and world fraternity but they are not weak and fickle. They will not give up the fight even though the immediate prospects are gloomy. With no hesitation, with no slackening of effort, they will pursue the path that leads to the common goal.

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DO WE SURVIVE DEATH?

By

C. E. M. JOAD,

Most people want to survive bodily death. The fact is obvious, although to my mind unaccountable.

I am a reasonably happy and successful man, happier, I believe, more successful, friends insist, than most.

Also I like myself well enough.

Nevertheless, the thought that I might have to continue in company with myself through eternity is to me quite intolerable.

If we have lived to the last ounce of of our energy and used ourselves to to the extreme of our capacity, we shall not ask for more.

There Are Two Kinds of Facts

I am making a clean breast of these beliefs and desires of mine so that you may allow for possible bias in my interpretation of the evidence.

I now proceed to the question : What is the nature of the evidence? Well, there are facts and there are theories. Let us take the facts first. They are of two kinds, physical and psychological.

A brilliant example of the " physical facts " has been recently afforded by the so-called " Margery " experiments in Boston, U.S.A.

Margery, the wife of a Boston surgeon Dr. Crandon, is one of the most famous mediums of modern times. She is "controlled"—I am using of necessity the phraseology normally employed in spiritualist circles—by what purports to be the spirit of her brother Walter, who was killed in an accident some years ago.

Thumbprints In The Liquid Wax

A bowl of liquid wax is placed in the seance room, and Walter, using, presumably, the stuff of Margery's body reduced to an ectoplasmic condition, has frequently made thumbprints on the wax.

These thumbprints, it is asserted, have been carefully investigated on more than one occasion by a fingerprint expert, who has testified to the fact that they were not the thumbprints of any person in the room.

It is said to be impossible to fake a thumbprint at short notice, and as the wax is asserted to have been inspected and found to be unmarked at the beginning of the seance, the inference suggested is that some immaterial agency used the material stuff of the medium's body to make thumbprints of its own.

Now why should this immaterial agency be the surviving spirit of Margery's brother?

The story of the thumbprints has a sequel which, if we can accept it at its face value, would appear definitely to establish the fact of survival.

It is said that certain small objects belonging to Walter in his lifetime, in particular the razor which he used on the morning of his death, have been carefully preserved and still bear upon them the traces of his fingerprints.

The Message Convinces Them

These traces have been revived by technical methods and have been found to be identical in every respect with the marks left on the wax in the seance room. Well, what more do you want?

The " psychological facts " are the well-known spirit messages. The medium goes into a trance. While in the trance she begins to speak, alleging that she is "controlled" by a spirit, usually the spirit of some person who would normally be called "dead."

Frequently the message conveying the information is addressed to one of the sitters, who knew the "dead person" and may be presumed, therefore, to be in a position to check the information, and it is to be noted that the message frequently carries absolute conviction to the individual to whom it is addressed.

Choosing Between The Theories

Various physical facts support this, the spiritualist interpretation. The voice which speaks is perceptibly different from that of the medium, so also are its modes of expression.

Now for theory! There are so many theories which purport to prove that the soul must survive bodily death, and they are so richly various, that I find it difficult to choose.

The Soul Must Be Immortal

The one which follows I take from Plato's "Republic." Everything, says Plato, that is seen to perish is destroyed, not, as appears to be the case, by some external agency, but by an internal evil, that is, a diseased condition proper and peculiar to itself. Thus prolonged starvation causes the destruction of the body. But it does this only in so far as it first produces in the body certain evil effects proper and peculiar to the body, as, for example, loss of blood, wastage of tissues, and, finally, cessation of the action of the heart.

The soul alone cannot be destroyed by the evil "proper and peculiar" to itself. For the evil "proper and peculiar" to itself is moral evil, and wickedness, so far from destroying the soul, only causes it to flourish the more vigorously.

Therefore, since the soul cannot be destroyed by its own "proper and peculiar" evil, the soul must be immortal.

Let us suppose that for any one of the foregoing reasons you feel convinced that survival is a fact. You will then be very surprised when you find that others do not share your conviction,

The evidence, I hold, is never foolproof. Take, for example, the Margery case. A few years ago there was published an alleged exposure of the whole series of experiments, according to which the Walter thumbprints were stated to be those of a Boston dentist who at one time attended the seances.

Margery's husband has met the alleged exposure in detail, but many of those who have carefully investigated the voluminous literature regard his answer as unconvincing. In other words, as is always the case where this baffling subject is concerned, the sceptic has his loophole.

Or take the spirit communications.

Are the messages convincing to an impartial observer? I doubt it. It is not merely that they often bear upon them the marks of an all-too-human origin.

Only too often spirit messages are couched in the language of pious platitude and ethical uplift.

My Mind Is Not Made up

These considerations are very far from being final. The issue is one upon which each must make up his mind for himself.

I have not made up mine; I can only say that I think the claim to survival unproven.

But there is another consideration which weighs with me more strongly than any. It is this. The connection of mind and body is admittedly very close. An invalid, for example, has a different mentality from a healthy man, a hunchback from a straight man. Change a man's body, in fact, and you change the man.

What sort of person, then, should I be if I survived without my body? I should, it is obvious, be changed beyond recognition. So much so, indeed, that, if I may commit an Irishism, if it is really I who survive the demolition of my body, then *I* must be a totally different person. Something, then, may survive; but it is not

C. E. M. Joad.

THE CRISIS IN THE NEW DEAL

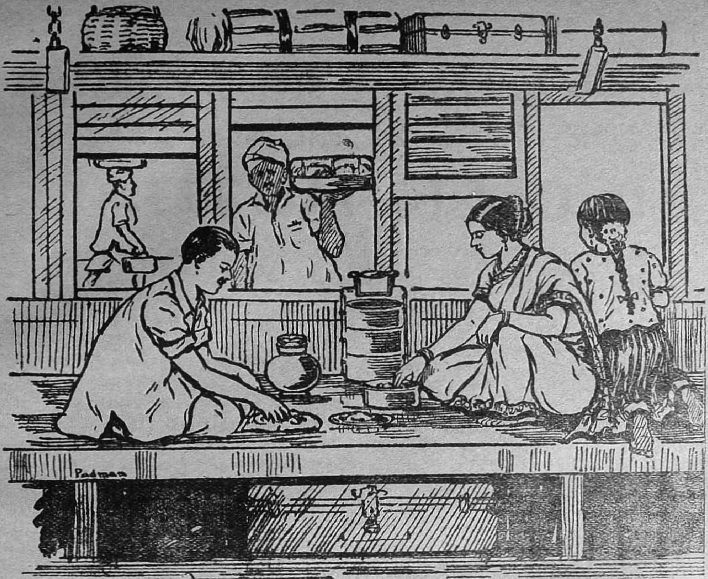
SUPREME COURT AND ITS CRITICS

By **Harold J. Laski**

The decision of the Supreme Court in the recent Agricultural Processing Tax case may well be regarded, a generation from now, as its most momentous decision since the Dred-Scott case which, eighty years ago, precipitated the American Civil War. It is not merely that, by a surprisingly narrow construction of the Constitution, it has destroyed the most popular and the most successful part of the Roosevelt experiment. It is not merely, either, that, following upon the "New Deal's overthrow in the Schechter case last June, the decision has now laid its foundations in ruins. It is even more important than these things, first, that it virtually withholds from the President and Congress the right, in the twentieth century, to intervene in the regulation of commerce and agriculture; and, secondly, that it does so by a technique of constitutional interpretation which, behind the facade of law, makes "reasonableness" in legislation a matter settled not by the views of the President and the elected Legislature but by the private social philosophy of a majority of the Supreme Court.

The decision is a staggering one less because of the particular legislation it destroys than because, as Mr. Justice Stone pointed out in his remarkable dissenting opinion, of the grounds upon which that legislation is destroyed. The Schechter case laid it down that there shall be no Federal regulation of industrial conditions; this was held to be an invasion of the sovereignty of the States. The new decision adds thereto the fiat that the taxing power of Congress shall not be used to promote the general welfare of the American people in any instance where the subject-matter involved is vested in the States by the Constitution. Everyone knows that the States were powerless to deal effectively with the issues raised by the collapse of farm prices; the Supreme Court's answer is that if the States cannot deal with it no one else can. Some fifty million farmers and their dependents are to suffer because the founders of the American Constitution could not foresee the kind of world in which we are now living.

And it is impossible, given the canons of construction accepted by the Court, to set limits to the implications of the decision. In principle, at least, it seems to strike into impotence all Federal aid to education, to the unemployed, to vocational rehabilitation. It seems to attack the immense effort of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, the Tennessee Valley experiment, the attempt to control the public utilities and the marketing of securities. Though it is a commonplace that none of these things can, under modern conditions, be undertaken adequately by the States, the Supreme Court says that rather than that they shall be undertaken by the Federal Government they shall not be undertaken at all. It is not going beyond the mark to say that, short of constitutional amendment, the Supreme Court has announced that the Constitution denies



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to the only authority which can effectively regulate the right to regulate effectively.

On what grounds? On the ground, above all, that, under the division of powers of 1787, the authority taken by Congress is an "unreasonable" invasion of functions confided to the States. That word must be read in the context of another recent decision that a Federal statute ordering railroad companies to set up retiring pension schemes for their employees was an "unreasonable" violation of liberty of contract; was, therefore, a denial of due process of law. The Court's conception of "reasonableness," in a word, is built upon a social philosophy which Congress does not accept, which does not even commend itself to a significant minority (Brandeis, Cardozo, and Stone, J. J.) of its own members. It is a quarter of a century since Mr. Justice Holmes, the most distinguished member of the Court since Marshall, reminded his brethren, over a similar issue, that "the Fourteenth Amendment does not enact Mr. Herbert Spencer's 'Social Statics." It is well over a century since Marshall himself urged the Court to realise that "it is a Constitution we are expounding." The success of the doctrine of judicial review depends wholly upon the willingness of the judges not to insist upon the substitution of their private view of what is wise social legislation for the view taken by the Federal or State Legislatures, granted only that there is no obvious violation of the plain letter of the Constitution. It depends, also, upon the willingness of the judges so to form its spirit as continuously to adapt its working to the needs of new times. The decisions of the Court upon the Roosevelt experiment show, decisively, that it is willing to do neither of these things. It stands by a conception of property rights (as in the railroad pension case) which was not only obsolete forty years ago in this country but which the habits of the Court from 1916 to 1933 had led one to hope was obsolete in the United States also. It stands by a conception of the division of functions between State and Federal government which leaves to the former obligations it cannot, in the nature of things, undertake, while it deprives the latter of the right to afford the American people the aid expected from it. Its conception of property confers right without the duty of fulfilling the modern conception of the duty inherent in right; its conception of Federalism strikes into impotence the elementary powers required by any Government in a modern society..

The English student of the American situation can best, perhaps, appreciate the meaning of the Supreme Court's attitude if one says that, broadly speaking, it would have meant that the House of Lords would have declared unconstitutional pretty well the whole body of our social legislation since 1906 on the ground that they were matters which either fell to be dealt with by the local authorities or were so detrimental to the right of property as to be beyond the powers of any Government. An Englishman would say that such an attitude is a plain violation of commonsense. Yet it is, in effect, the stand the Supreme Court has taken.

Over twenty years ago, in the Home Rule debates, Mr. Asquith (as he then was) was pressed to accept a Unionist amendment which sought to give to the judicial committee of the Privy Council powers over Irish legislation similar to those enjoyed by the American Supreme Court over the legislation of Congress and the State Legislatures. He bluntly refused on the ground that this would entrust a judicial body with a political discretion it could not hope to exercise without involving itself in passionate controversy certain to impair the respect in which a judiciary should be held; and he pointed to

American experience as the justification of his refusal. Few observers will watch the present developments in the United States without a profound conviction that Mr. Asquith was right.

The issues the Supreme Court has raised will not be settled in a day or a year. What has now come into view is the need for the ample revision of the foundations of the Constitution. It will not be easy to secure this revision. Behind the attitude of the Supreme Court are ranged State authorities traditionally jealous of their historic rights, business men who look with anger and dismay at the development of liberal legislation, an amending process as difficult as any in the Constitutions of modern States. And behind these issues as formal problems of law there is a deeper conflict. It is the question of the objectives to which the American Commonwealth should be devoted. A political democracy seeks, as the President has insisted, to use its power for the promotion of the interests of the common man. There stands in the way of that purpose a body of vested interests which live by an obsolete social philosophy in which the rights of property are placed before the claims of the common welfare. It is that obsolete social philosophy the Supreme Court seems determined to protect. In doing so it brings into view those fundamental questions of the State the discussion of which, as Burke said always takes a nation much farther than it is consciously willing to go. There will be grave and dramatic developments in the United States of the next decade.

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THE MEERUT CONFERENCE: A RETROSPECT

(**By A Delegate**)

Methinks it was Macaulay who said "The Hall was worthy of such a trial. It was the hall in which Thirty English kings down from William Rufus had been crowned......" When I came to Meerut to attend the Second Conference of the All India Socialist Party, I felt the same. The City of Meerut was worthy of such a Conference of radical elements from the different parts of India. It is the Meerut where the first batch of Communist Revolutionaries from India and abroad were tried some seven years ago. And it is the same Meerut where the first shot was fired against Britain's Imperial aggression in the year 1857. And those two, though leaving their landmarks on the history of the nation, were failures; though leaving a tradition were, later, to be styled as mistakes and as premature. The Socialist conference also stand unique in that it was not a perfect success; nay, it proved a failure.

I am not going to undertake a review of the resolutions, one by one; but it may be stated, in general, that the resolutions showed a compromising tendency which is quite unpardonable in a Marxist Party, such as the Congress Socialist Party claims to be.

The acceptance of the Benares thesis in its entirety, calling forth from the Congress Socialists a more compromising attitude towards the Indian National Congress and its present reactionary leadership is one such Un-Marxian act. And the token vote of censure, the resolution claiming that the Party has done excellent work during the previous year and hence congratulates itself on the "satisfactory" progress made by it, is nothing but ridiculous.

One cannot understand the spirit of the resolutions of a Party like the Congress Socialist Party calling upon the Government to release the prisoners in Jail. If it is a mere formality, it lowers the prestige of the Party and if the Conference really means business by these resolutions, one looks with wonder and pity at their lack of sense and propriety,

The reluctance on the part of some prominent Congress Socialists to subscribe to the idea of helping the strikers financially is a point which should not be skipped over. Even if they are not in a position to help the strikers to any material extent, it is the duty of the party to launch a programme to that effect which will show in what esteem they hold the workers and their fight for their immediate demands and rights.

A passing reference to a resolution which was moved by a delegate and voted out in the Subjects Committee will not be out of place. The resolution referred to is the one in which he wanted the party to permit its members to hold office in a Congress Committee in which there is a Socialist miniority only. There was heated discussion on the same ; it was referred to the General Secretary of the Party who gave a very vague opinion more leaning to its acceptance and it was supported by some very prominent members of the Party. Anyway it,

was well the resolution was voted out but it shows the opinion on the part of certain members of the Party.

At this stage, it will be worth while to refer to the first Conference of the Party which was held at Bombay in October 1934. The strong and serious discussions, the divisions that took place over certain issues and the really business like manner of dealing with resolutions and the programme showed the life that existed in the party at that time. Perchance, most of the elements of that nature have left the party for want of any impetus and interest in the party or its programme. "The extreme left-wing" to which "Shant" referred in an article in the 2nd issue of the Drashti of Bombay after the first Conference was conspicuous at Meerut by its absence. The time is not far away, perhaps, when the C. S. P. will merge with the official Congress, as is evinced by the now accepted reconciling attitude of the Party to a section of the much-denounced Congress leadership. The hostility shown to the extremist elements, in the party, by the Executive and that especially to the communist element (though this is our unwarranted statement) is rather suicidal to the interests of the nation in general and the party in particular.

May we hope for a change for the better in the next Conference of the party after the Lucknow session when the Congress Leadership will have shown the wolf under their Khadi cloak.

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THE BOGEY OF COMMUNISM

Causes Underlying British Foreign Policy

"I do not see how we can avoid the conclusion that the search for world peace, since it is a project to subordinate our sovereign government to something larger, comes near to or passes the legal definition of treason. Moreover, the necessary conditions for world peace bring us into sharp conflict not simply with the ordinary patriot, but with much that is regarded by large sections of people as current morality. And, as a further obstacle, such views must necessarily antagonise big interests entrenched behind tariff walls and currency advantages. A real world peace movement must be a revolutionary movement in politics, finance, industrialism and the daily life alike. It is not a proposed change in certain formal aspects of life; it is a proposal to change the whole of life."

(*H. G. Wells in "The Way the World is Going.*")

"If the League of Nations merely meant some new wheel to the coach, I do not think the addition worth making, nor do I think the vehicle would carry us any farther. The League must be such as to mean much more than new councils to provide for Arbitration and Conciliation in future troubles. The new institution of peace must not be something additional, something external, super-imposed on the pre-existing structure. It must be an organic change; it must be woven into the very texture of our political system. The new *motif* of peace must in future operate internally, constantly, inevitably from the very heart of our political organisation, and must, so to speak, flow from the nature of things political. Then, and not till then, will the impulse to war atrophy and shrivel up, and war itself stand stripped in all its horrible nakedness, and lose all the association of romance, all the atmosphere of honour, which has proved so intoxicating and irresistible in the past. That is way I am pleading for a more fundamental conception of the League, for a League whose task will not be to stem the on-coming tide with a broom, but for one which will prevent the tide from flowing at all... If the future peace of the world is to be maintained, it will not be sufficient merely to erect an institution for the purpose of settling international disputes after they have arisen, it will be necessary to devise an instrument of government which will deal with the causes and sources of disputes...And it must be the wise regulator, the steadying influence in the forward movement now set going among the nations of the earth.

"For there is no doubt that mankind is once more on the move. The very foundations have been shaken and loosened, and things are again fluid. The tents have been struck, and the great caravan of humanity is once more on the march. Vast social and industrial changes are coming, perhaps upheavals which may, in their magnitude and effects, be comparable to war itself. A steadying, controlling, regulating influence will be required to give stability to progress, and to remove that wasteful friction which has dissipated so much social force in the past, and in this war more than ever before. These great functions could only be adequately fulfilled by the League of Nations. Responding to such vital needs and coming at such a unique opportunity in history, it may well be destined to mark a new era in the Government of Man, and become to

the peoples the guarantee of Peace' to the workers of all races the great International, and to all the workers of all races the great pression of the moral and spiritual unity of the human race."

(*General Smuts; pamphlet: "The League of Nations: A Practical Suggestion," published in 1918.*)

1. Vested Interests and Peace

The Conservative Party is essentially the City, the F. B. I. and the landlords in politics. The House of Lords is for all practical purposes an annex of the Conservative Party and consists overwhelmingly of the magnates of industry and finance together with the remains of the old land-owning class; it represents the fusion of plutocracy and aristocracy. In the House of Commons the position is much the same. Mr. Peter Howard, writing in the *Sunday Express* on August 12th, 1934, states that 170 members of the present House of Commons hold between them 650 company directorships. Sir Charles Barrie, Conservative M.P. for Southampton, holds the record with 34. Mr. George Balfour, Tory M.P. for Hampstead, comes second with 26, including 16 chairmanships. Sir Robert Horne has only 10; but "if I had my choice," says Mr. Howard, "I would take his ten in preference to all the others." He is a director of Lloyds Bank and Chairman of the Great Western Railway. He is concerned with "navigation, mining, almost every activity'" including oil. His income from his directorships, Mr. Howard puts at £ 20,000 a year.

The overwhelming majority of Conservative M.P.'s is drawn from the class that lives by rent, interest or profit, with a sprinkling of military and naval officers. It is not disputed that the National Government came in response to the pressure of banking and industrial interests, and that throughout their career they have acted as the caretakers and agents of those intersts. Industry after industry has been lavishly subsidised. Cattle dealers are receiving a subsidy of 5s. per cwt. of beef, costing the taxpayers a round £ 3,000,000. Guaranteed prices to the milk trade account for £ 1,500,000 a year. The sugar beet growers have already cost the nation over £ 50,000,000 and are still costing over £ 4,000,000 annually. The land tax has been abandoned and the Derating Acts have relieved landlords and farmers of rates to the extent of £ 18,000,000 a year. Altogether Conservative agricultural interests are being subsidised, directly, to the amount of £52,000,000 a year.

The iron and steel industry—as indeed practically every industry—is being assisted by tariffs and quotas. The shipping trade has been granted loans and subsidies up to a maximum of £20,000,000. The brewers have had tax remissions amounting to £14,000,000 a year.

All this has been done at the request of the vested interests themselves and with the purpose of enabling them to continue to earn profits. Under the National Government the State bleeds the taxpayers on behalf of these interests without exacting any corresponding public control of production and distribution. That is because to the Conservative Party these vested interests appear identical with the interests of the nation, of law and order. nay, of civilisation itself. To their minds the only alternative to fostering and cherishing private enterprise is ruin. Therefore they have not so much yielded to the pressure of these interests as reflected them politically, acted as their agents and sought to promote their welfare by the use of political power and the taxpayers' money, in the sincere belief that they were thereby doing their duty by the nation.

The influence of private vested interests has been equally marked in the foreign policy of the Government. We

have seen that behind the Governments' benevolent neutrality toward Japan was the deep-rooted reluctance of industrial and financial interests to apply economic sanctions that might jeopardise their investments in Japan, coupled with the belief that China needed a lesson because she was anxious to ged rid of foreign concessions and extra-territorial privileges, and that Japan could be relied on to keep the Far East safe for British profits and to combat the danger of Communism,

As regards the Disarmament Conference, Mr. Henderson publicly stated on several occasions that his task as President had been rendered very much more difficult by the machinations of the arms manufacturers. The United States arms inquiry has shown that British arms manufacturers have been quite as active and unsavoury as those of other countries. We have seen in Chapter II that the attitude of the Conservative Party has throughout been to defend the sacred right of private enterprise to make money by by dealing in instruments of death and destruction.

The Government's policy at the Disarmament Conference was all along to yield to the various interests and pressures behind it of the arms manufacturers, the aeroplane industry and the fighting services, while adopting public attitudes that would placate the Peace Movement at home.

In the case of Nazi Germany the way in which our aeroplane manufacturers sold the Nazis aeroplane engines at the time when Germany was forbidden military aviation, and this for the sake of profit, and helped to create the air menace under which we are now bidden to tremble, is fresh in every one's mind. The repeated refusal of the Government to do anything when their attention was drawn to the fact in the House of Commons and eleswhere cannot easily be forgotten.

It is also no secret that British bankers, who helped to bring on the 1931 crisis by borrowing money at a low rate of interest in the United States and placing it in Germany at 7 and 8 per cent, where it was "frozen,' have been granting the Nazis British credits which the latter have used for rearmament.

In all this there was little except the blind desire for profits, backed by the argument that the City has nothing to do with politics, or in other words takes an entirely egoistic and a moral view—"business is business." But there is more to it than that. Dr. Hugh Dalton in "Practical Socialism for Britain" gives a striking account of the activities of Mr. Montagu Norman, the Governor of the Bank of England, in opposing his own Government partly out of what may be described as a gold complex and a belief in the Immaculate Conception of bankers, but partly also, as an enthusiatic biographer quoted by Dr. Dalton points out, because he "firmly" pursues a foreign policy of his own, which has been "in sharp contrast to the series of feeble compromises that has characterised the official British foreign policy." Dr. Dalton observes that while he was serving in the (official) British Foreign Office as Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, he became "dimly aware of such a dyarchy." But, he adds, Mr. Norman's biographer has made it all much plainer, for he explains that.

We have only to add that Mr. Montagu Norman has made free use of the argument that the Nazis must be supported by credits because they are a bulwark against the danger of Communism, and has attempted for this purpose to induce the Federal Reserve Bank of the United States as well as Continental bankers to advance money to Germany. In this, it will be observed, he adopted the same view as as Sir Arthur Balfour, whom we quoted

already as stating (in 1933) that of course Germany would make war, but nevertheless the Nazis were better than Communism and he considered Great Britain must help Germany to rearm so that she could hold her own against Soviet Russia.

There is a powerful element in the City, the F.B.I., the Conservative Party and in general among the political defenders of the existing order who agree with Mr. Lloyd George's plea in the House of Commons on November 28th, 1934, that Nazi Germany should be supported because we might want to use her for a war against the Soviet Union in order to keep down Communism in Europe.

Similarly, the Die-Hards in the Cabinet and their supporters prevented the Government's taking its stand on the Covenant in time to preserve peace, and forced Mr. Baldwin to exploit this crisis for a snap election which would give them a free hand to rearm. It remains only to add, as was pointed out in Chapter V, that the same elements in the Conservative Party and the Government, with the help of certain circles in the City, have been secretly conveying to M. Laval that he need not take the British desire for sanctions too seriouslv, and that as soon as the election is over the British Government will join him in doing a deal with Mussolini on the same lines and for the same objects as that desired by the French Right. Our Die-Hards believe that after the election they will be in charge of the Government, with Mr. Amery reinforcing Lord Hailsham, Lord Londonderry and Mr. Neville Chamberlain in the Cabinet, and that they will have no longer anything to to fear from public opinion. They can then probably not succeed in influencing the Government sufficiently to make it embark on any such suicidal roguery. But they are getting their own way enough to prevent the Government standing resolutely for the League.

The Conservative party and the vested interests do not understand what is happening in the world, but realise that the situation is bad and dangerous and that something must be done. They feel the ground-swell of tremendons forces which are making the ships of State all over the world tug at their moorings and have already set some drifting toward unknown destinies. And so they resort to economic nationalism, war preparations, and appeals to panic and patriotism.

(*From "Inquest on Peace" by "Vigilantes"*)

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By **Miss Shanta**

Subramania Gurukal was perspiring profusely. The sweat drops that were slowly dropping from his forehead sought shelter in his mouth, while some of them unable to cover the entire anatomy of the priest which was none too small, found a convenient way down to the floor of the sacred room where the image of the deity stood like a sentry, decorated by all the wealth its priests could command, blinding human eyes by the brilliancy of its diamonds and emeralds. This image of human devotion passively acquiesced in all that the priest said or did, powerless in all its glory, feeble in spite of its omnipotency to protest against the ravages of man.

"Om Namasivaya, Nama Sivaya" muttered the Gurukal. The words were coming out of his mouth like water from a tap. Weary with the noise and tired by the monotony of the place the children began to cry. But the mothers found it more interesting to feast their eyes on the ornaments of the image than take care of their own children.

"Get out of my way," roared a bulky frame smeared with ashes and rushing past the crowd. The Gurukal moved hastily to and fro to show his importance. He lit the camphor and all eyes now closed in devotion. The children lay hushed for a while. The bell stopped its toll indicating the termination of the puja for the day. The offerings to the deity, after being safely stowed away by the gurukal in a cavity behind the image was distributed among those present who were eagerly waiting for it. The priest then gathered his spoils for the day and rushed out of the mad crowd treating them by virtue of his big position little better than the dust under his feet. The God was locked behind the massive gates and steely lock.

The gurukal's wife was a woman who took more interest in the daily returns of her husband than the husband himself. She snatched the basket from him and ran away with it, to the recesses of her kitchen to prevent foreign eyes seeing the secret of its contents. The gurukal rolled his huge frame on the mat emitting forth weary sighs as if he had been in harness all through the day.

And what was more the gurukal chewed tobacco in large amounts. He always spat vigorously, irrespective of whether anyone was near-by or not. Someone or other fell a victim to his saliva every day but few could protest, against the vulgarity, for he was a priest. People who did not like it merely avoided his proximity.

II

Sethuram had an ever open door. Nobody ever went away unsatisfied from it.

A child knocked at it and went in calling the man. It was a little girl. She found him asleep. But the child did not hesitate. She shook him with both her hands and woke him up.

The girl stood with tears in her eyes. Her clothes were in patches, her hair wild and her look pitiful. She began to sob.

"My...mother...is very...ill. Please do come and see."

Sethuram did not hesitate a minute. He followed the little girl till he stopped

before a little low-roofed hovel. The girl led him inside. A foul odour assailed his nostrils but he heeded it not. He beheld lying on the ground a middle-aged woman, pale and thin gasping out her breath. She groaned and feebly moved her hands. Sethuram knelt beside her and watched. He knew the cause. Hunger had wrought that havoc. He immediately ran out and brought some food and medicine to restore the health of the patient. Sitting by her side he fed her slowly. The eyes of the woman, till now half closed, opened in joy at the sight of food and when she finished the tumbler of gruel she found enough strength to thank with a faint expression of her face. Sethuram then comforted the little girl and departed.

III

The next morning Sethuram left them with an abundant supply of food and some money. He was hurrying back to his house and in the haste did not see the gurukal standing by the tree as there was not much difference between the trunk of the tree and his giant form. A whole mouthful of tobacco which the priest was about to spit with his usual vigour fell on the white dress of Sethuram making a glaring red stain. He looked up and saw the indifferent attitude of the gurukal in spite of the insult he had made.

Sethuram was angry. He had no respect for priests and such other parasites. He roundly rebuked the arrogant gurukal. An altercation ensued.

The gurukal began to scream and shouted out that the low-born Sethuram had dared to touch him and beat him. His yell brought forth a number of people outside. They in turn ignored the gurukal's fault and abused Sethuram for his sacrilege. Tbe gurukal's wife cried curses with great vehemence. This sensation spread round the village. All the poor people who had immense respect for Sethuram were confused and could not understand why the noble man had done like that.

After a time Sethuram faded away from the scene of action. The gurukal invoked the arm of the law and charged him with assault. Sethuram was ordered into the presence of the village munsif.

His bearing showed the heart behind him. He stood there in front of the munsiff with head thrown back in defiance. The complainant was also there; his avaricious face gleaming with cunning.

When the trial commenced, the gurukal got up and repeated his charges aloud a hundred times. He knew full well that he was uttering a falsehood but he did not shrink. He was a priest who was above all such scruples. He longed for vengeance on the man who had so boldly defied him, and he had already made it profitable for the munsiff to speak on his side.

Sethuram who was then questioned, stoutly denied having assaulted the priest, and charged him with having spat on him. But the Munsiff who was already prejudiced persecuted him with certain irrelevant questions about his religious principles and Sethuram denied belief in any religion much to the amazement of the munsiff. This statement was enough to base a judgment upon.

The poorer section who had believed in the innocence of Sethuram looked in suspense. The little girl who had come the day before to ask help for her mother was also there looking at him with tears in her eyes. When Sethuram recognised her she ran up to him and hugged him.

Just then a post-man came up to Sethuram and delivered a letter. Sethuram tore it open and read the contents. He was about to finish the letter when the munsiff darted towards him and snatched it. When he began to read it, his expression changed to one of seriousness.

He looked at the Gurukal, and made some signs. The foolish Gurukal saw but understood nothing. The Munsiff returned the letter to Sethuram and announced that the case was postponed to the next day. The priest looked at him in dismay.

IV

The letter that had worked so much change was merely an invitation to Sethuram by a nationalist group to preside over an ensuing Conference. Sethuram had all along been working unostentatiously in the village, though his name as a great fighter for freedom was known all over India. The inhabitants of the village did not know that it was the same famous Sethuram who was in their midst.

There was a great problem for the Village Munsiff. These Congressmen were always creating trouble, and Sethuram might perhaps report the matter to the higher authorities. And then he may be scolded by the Government. It was better for him to be on the safe side.

But when he met the gurukal he did not say the same thing. He first told him that it was revealed that he was a Congressman, and as such if they merely gave the information to the police, they may arrest him some day. And the poor devil of a gurukal believed it, for he did not know the contents of the letter.

The next day, the Munsiff passed an order warning Sethuram to be of good behaviour. Sethuram received the sentence with a loud laugh that surprised the gurukal. But when he heard next day that Sethuram had left the village he thought he had after all succeeded in his revenge by driving him out of the village. He was satisfied with the result, and paid a handsome reward to the Munsiff who had so far helped him.

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INDIAN POLITICS IN THE MELTING POT

By The Editor

"The New Government of India Act is a trivial affair. We have to only end it and not mend it." In these words Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru greeted the pressmen at London when he was confronted by them with a volley of questions. Pandit Jawaharlal is a man of courage, determination and steadfastness to his ideas. I have to presume that when he says that the Act is a trivial affair, he means that the Act is not the main thing engaging the attention of the people, but their desire to become completely independent. In his Lahore Presidential Address, he declared that he is a socialist and a republican meaning thereby that he stands for a form of Government in India controlled by the mass of our countrymen functioning in their interest without the aid of the henchmen of Imperialism either foreign or indigenous. It is after that historical pronouncement that the nation engaged in a serious struggle against Imperialism with the net result of an unwanted constitution thrust upon India. The majority of the Englishmen was made to believe that the India Act has conferred Self-Government on India and that it is one of the most intricate and masterly piece of legislation effected in the 20th century. As such the average Englishman with his powerful aid of the colossal ignorance of Indian affairs swallowed the pill given to him by his party master and did not worry about India. Pandit Jawaharlal was right in reprimanding the average English citizen about his want of knowledge of Indian affairs. He is much more concerned with his pig growing, coal mining and game hunting than with ruling an empire which he has left to other competent people who know their job. His own master at home is the master of the empire also and as such he finds very little interest in what way his master rules another slave as he is more concerned about his master ruling himself. The salvation of India lies in the hands of her own children who should be roused from their present mental stupor and made to realise their plight of being slaves instead of masters of their own country. I hope Jawaharlal by his inspiring lead will strive his best to secure this end by giving a new orientation to Indian Politics.

The election of Jawaharlal Nehru to the Presidentship of the Indian National Congress for a second time is a testimony of the nation's regard for his services to the country. All provinces have unanimously recommended him to that post of honour and responsibility. There was no use of hiding the fact that the choice was between Jawaharlal and C. R. and the Congress leaders preferred Jawaharlal to C. R. By this choice it is meant to keep the Congress forces united and as Jawaharlal likes Congress work which has become part of his being, he will not be a serious obstacle even if the Congress adopts a programme of work to which he may not wholeheartedly agree. Past events have shown that Jawaharlal is a man of accommodating temperament and as such there will be no serious trouble in the Congress ranks. Though his sympathies are with the leftists, the right wing leadership has immense confidence in him and Jawaharlal bound down to office is much more innocuous than Jawaharlal outside

office. It is difficult to forecast the course of events likely to happen as there is uncertainty in everything that is taking place today. The Congress is committed to Parliamentary and constitutional Politics and knowing full well the views of Jawaharlal, he is elected President of the coming Congress. One leader of the Congress said, "The logical outcome of the present policy of the Congress is the acceptance of office under the new constitution." With this statement and the statement of Jawaharlal that the India Act can only be ended and not mended, one finds it very difficult to fathom the depth of Politics of our country.

* * *

The Karaikudi Conference on the advice of Sjt. C. Rajagopalachary did not pass any resolution on the question of acceptance of office by Congressmen. The reason is not far to seek. As Mr. Satyamurti in his interview stated the elections are likely to take place in 1937 and before that there will be another Conference and the issue is not imminent. Moreover, the whole world knows, that the Tamil Nadu Congressmen, or rather majority of the leaders favour acceptance of office and they have not made a secret of it. Mrs. Lakshmipathy, the President of the Conference in her Presidential Address stressed this point and declared that the Congress should accept office.

These office wallas mainly ignore the basis and fundamental principle of the Congress institution. It is an organisation intended to fight for complete Independence of our country and as the resolution of the Youth League Labour Protection League and other allied institutions pointed out on the independence say, acceptance of office under the aegis of Imperialism is quite inconsistent with fighting for Independence. The Congress when once accepts office gives up its role as the Champion of independence of India. It ceases to be anti-Imperialist organisation and as such forfeits the confidence of the masses. Whether the Congress should be brought to such level is the point which the Congress leaders should consider. Their responsibility is great and they should not do any act which posterity will not condone. Let them think very seriously before they leap.

SOVIETS' MARRIAGE LAWS

FUNDAMENTAL CHANGES

Several hundred thousand children in Soviet Russia ar inadequately supported becouse their fathers have deserted them or refused to pay alimony to divorced wives, according to a survey recently completed. Certain features of the Soviet marriage and divorce laws have broken down in practice, and have been altered.

A law is passed which provides imprisonment up to two years for repeated failures to pay alimony, and authorizes state-owned offices or factories to deduct as much as 50 percent of a man's wages when he refuses to support his children. The new law stipulates that those who refuse to pay alimony on grounds of unemployment shall be sent to forced labour camps.

The Communist Party organ *Pravda* said: "We cannot compel a man to live with his family if he does not want to. But the State will compel a father to support his children. We must

make it clear that failure to do so is a crime, and must be punished with all the severity of proletarian law."

There is no suggestion, as in the earlier years of the Revolution, that the state will gladly undertake the care of all unwanted children. It has become apparent that the state cannot afford this luxury. Instead, the well—organised propaganda system is instructed to make it clear that the state will not assume obligations for children, and that this is the duty of parents.

The Communist rulers of Russia have constantly changed their opinions about the relations between parents and children. At one time they urged that the family as a social until be broken up, and that parents turn over all children to the state for rearing and education. For more than a decade after the Revolution they encouraged children to ignore the authority of their parents as well as that of teachers. The only authority which the child need recognize, they contended, was the State.

It is not suprising that the younger generation, reared in this atmosphere, should account in large part for the 200,000 deserted children and the fact that 40 per cent of the fathers ordered to pay alimony for the children's support have failed to do so. These are the official figures. Many younger people had children in the belief that no such duties would be imposed. They did not anticipate the reversal in the views of communist rulers.

Fundamental changes in Soviet marriage and divorce laws are regarded as inevitable before the present unsatisfactory conditions can be improved. The laws still permit divorce with no trouble and expense whenever man or wife desires it. They recognize as married any man and woman who live together openly. The official press records instances of persons who marry a dozen times in a few years.

But experimental period in Russia is drawing to an end. The Government is busy correcting the mistakes of earlier ventures. Children are being taught to recognize the authority of teacher and parent as well as state. The family's position as a vital social unit has alread ben partially restored. It seems obvious that marriage and divorce laws must be altered so as to prevent irresponsible persons from marrying repeatedly, as they do at present, having children by several wives or husbands, and then leaving the children unsatisfactorily or entirely unprovided for.

The New Age will make you A New Man

IS THE LEAGUE A CAPITALIST INSTITUTION ?

OR THE BEGINNING OF WORLD GOVERNMENT?

The real Conflict in the world today is not the war between Italy and Ethiopia. It is whether there is to be a League of Nations or whether it should be disbanded.

With the exception of Soviet Russia, there is no doubt that it is made up, in the main, of capitalist nations. By their very nature they are out for gain—to obtain the new or retain the old.

What then can Socialists have to do with such a body? Why is Soviet Russia in it?

* * *

The first point to note is that even capitalist States are divided in their interests. Britain, France Greece and many more stand to lose by war, while Germany, Japan and Italy hope to gain. Even if the League is admittedly composed of struggling capitalist groups.

there is an important conflict between nations who wish to maintain peace and those who are willing to gamble on a war of conquest.

Japan and Italy at the moment state quite openly that they must find an outlet for their goods and their populations.

Soviet Russia also stands for the maintenance of peace—her purpose being to preserve her new system and to have the advantages of collective security in the event of an attack by Japan.

* * *

The question of war or peace cannot be postponed but must be faced now. It divides itself for Socialists into two questions—can war be prevented under capitalism or must we despair until international Socialism is established Capitalism is always at war on the economic field and from time to time this bursts into armed war. Under capitalism war is always just around the corner.

The I. L. P., reasoning from this conclusion, put down a motion in the League debate :—

"......that the only way to world peace is by the overthrow of the capitalist system and the realisation of workers' power through a federation of Socialist Commonwealths."

They further proposed in reference to the League that the Government should withdraw.

"from this false organisation which can give no security to workers here or elsewhere against war with its false idea of a collective peace system within a world of capitalist powers."

It is a curious thing that the I. L. P. should advice Mr. Baldwin's Government to withdraw from the League.

* * *

Socialists fall into two main schools. One school is what we might say romantic. Socialism to them is a change from the hades of capitalism to the heaven of Socialism. With this romantic conception, it is sinful to take any part in the administration of society while capitalism lasts. All that can be done is to denounce it and its evils and call for Socialism which, presumably, the capitalists are meanwhile to prepare for us! The inference is that

Socialism and capitalism are two completely distinct and mutually repellant systems of society. Such Socialists are classed as Utopians—building castles in the air. Of such are those who faced with an immediate decision as to whether we shall have or not have a League of Nations denounce it because it is capitalist in character.

* * *

The railways are dominated by capitalists but we should never dream of scrapping them on that account. The development of air travel throughout the world is capitalist in main. It is still imperfect and there have been breakdowns. Should we say, do not use this instrument of travel because it is the capitalist and the advertisements give us a false idea of security? Actually at the beginning of railways there were such warnings issued about their danger, as the I. L. P. now convey about the League. But in these days these warnings came from bigoted old Tories, full of imaginary fears. Today these warnings about the League come from a body claiming to be "advanced". They find themselves in complete accord with the most reactionary of the Tories. Their sympathy with Mussolini can be understood for they stand for the same defiance of social discipline. Italy like them is opposed to Leagues or any standing orders which put restrictions on unrestrained licence.

The other type of Socialist claims to be scientfic by basing his Socialist conclusion on the process of historical development.

He sees the continual and growing power which mankind is obtaininig over natural and economic conditions. He recognises in capitalism a tremendous advance compared with feudalism, barbarism or savagery. Socialism is to him the next step forward from capitalism. Socialism far from destroying the achievements of capitalism, proceeds on the basis of these achievements to the still greater ones of Socialism. As Lenin put it:—

"For Socialism is nothing but the next step forward from State capitalist monopoly."

* * *

Such Socialists recognise that the roots of a new system are to be found far back in the old and that relics of the old system carry on into the new. In other words the forms which Socialism is going to take are to be seen in embryo around now.

For example, if Socialism comes within the next fifty years, the Socialists will have to live in the houses which are being built now by the present municipalities. Socialists. therefore, who confine their Socialism to romantic word pictures are missing the opportunity of planning now the realisation of the kind of houses Socialism should give to its people.

* * *

In the same way, no historical Socialist can doubt that the League of Nations is the future world government struggling to be born. It is born out of capitalism as Socialism itself will be. It is mainly capitalist in outlook, but its parents recognise that it is a new being, like other children, developing characteristics which displease its begotters.

So long as capitalism lasts, the League must deal with capitalist problems. The ever-present danger of war is a capitalist problem. It may not be possible to prevent war. But can any Socialist say we should not try? The League of Nations offers the only hope. It is the workers and their children who pay in blood for wars. Are we to say that they must despair and go on dying till capitalism ends or shall we use the great power of the Socialist Movement to see that this incipient world government is strengthened and at the earliest possible moment made a Co-operative Commonwealth of Socialist peoples? That is practical Socialism.

OUR OPEN FORUM

Western India States and Viceragal visits.

It has become a regular feature of British administration in India for out-going Viceroys to tour the Native States before their departure. Lord Irwin was invited by about four or five important states in India and Lord Willingdon has toured in nearly a dozen of these States.

When Lord Irwin visited the state of Kathiawar, the late Ranjit Singhji the well-known cricketeer, spent more then twenty-five lacs of rupees towards his reception expenses, The state which contains a population of nearly two and a half millions, was thus taxed at Rs. 4 per head. It is also to be remembered that these receptions are given in the name of the subjects who are supposed to participate in the functions. And what is the condition of these subjects? They consist mostly of peasants whose condition borders on poverty. Is it a fact worthy to be believed when we hear that these miserable people are the willing partners to the pomp and splendour, shooting parties and decorations requiring months of preparation and involving large sums of money and material when they cannot afford it?

Apart from the question of the paying capacity of the peasants there is the further problem of the impecunious nature of the finances of these Native States. After an elaborate show at these receptions they are at the end of their tether for money and devise fresh schemes of taxation or borrow from the money-lenders. The result of such a state of affairs on the administration of the States is seen in the example of the Jamnagar state. The financial reports as published in the press indicate that this state incurred an expense of nearly 125 lakhs of rupees in entertaining the past five Viceroys. And the result has been the grant of monopolies in the State for the sale of almost all articles of daily consumption, to the money-lender themselves.

The present period has been one of great distress among the subjects of the Native States and even the moderate section of public opinion has protested against this kind of wastage of money. But at the same time we do find now and then certain chiefs indulging in painfully eulogistic notes of remarks about the administration of these states. For instance Pandit Malaviya who presided over the Diamond Jubilee celebrations of H. H. The Gaekwar of Baroda compared his rule to that of Asoka and Yudhishtra and congratulated the subjects on possesing such a benevolent ruler. We must point out to the learned Pandit that the same benevolent Prince prohibited the Congress Golden Jubilee celebrations only a week before, an event for which the Pandit had taken all the trouble to go to Bombay to attend. But this is not the only instance of such hypocritical tribute for there are others who have done similarly. Will the leaders realise the gravity of the troubles of the Indian state subjects and make the cause of eight crores of people the cause of the country and stand by them in their struggle?

G. R. Trivedi, Madras.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

Meerut Conference

Events during the last month have moved swiftly. The political situation has assumed a new outlook, and a happy change is visible because of the continued agitation among the youths of India for a re-orientation of the political struggle. The Meerut Conference certainly marks an important stage in this respect. The Left wing of the Congress, the Socialists who met there, resolved on a militant programme for national independence, and turned down the attempts of some of the Congress leaders to work the Constitution. They have condemned office-acceptance as a reactionary step.

They have also emphasised in the most unequivocal terms that the present leadership and methods of the Congress party are not such as to promote the movement for independence in India.

The other campaign which the Congress has undertaken now viz., the *Harijan* movement has been condemned as side-tracking the main issue before the country. There is no doubt that the Congress need not have taken up this as a big programme while there is the crying need for political agitation to scrap the unwanted constitution and win the Independence of our country.

Jawaharlal's Election

The unanimous election of Pandit Jawaharlal as the President of the Lucknow Congress may no doubt give due recognition to the view-point of the youths in the political atmosphere. There is a great demand for a man with Leftist views. The Panditji is the nearest approach to it, and his unanimous election is highly significant as a compromise made by the elderly politicians in favour of youths. They might very well have hushed him up and brought forward a more docile and Rightist politician. But this move to support Jawaharlal is a welcome departure though the motive may be quite a diplomatic one. It was obvious that most of the youths would be satisfied with his lead in the Congress and they may not be creating a split inside the Congress organisation by their clamour for radicalism. A split hereafter especially of the Leftists is a factor which the Congress can no longer overlook and therefore they have avoided the event by nominating Jawaharlal.

At the same time, the Pandit is a person, who has moved much in Congress and other political circles, and who has several times compromised with Gandhiji and yielded to moderate views, according to occasions. Therefore, the elders might well have argued that it would be quite possible for them to achieve the necessary wirepulling behind the screen, and temper the Pandit's enthusiasm now and then.

As for Pandit Jawaharlal himself, his present utterances gleaned from press reports indicate that much of the Congress Liberalism will have to go if he really means to do what he says. He has expressed that he will not make any compromises with an Imperialist Government, and has condemned the India Act as "a source of constant irritation for revolt" A person with such extreme views is not likely to be a willing partner to the move to work the constitution which has now been made in some places where reactionary politicians have made themselves leaders.

The Karaikudi Show

This brings us naturally to the

Tamil Nad Provincial Conference at Karaikudi. Tke Conference was just a gathering to review the glories of the respective leaders by paying tributes to each other. Fundamental issues on which decisions were necessary, (especially coming as it did on the eve of the Lucknow Congress,) were shirked by the Madras leaders. It is well-known that the present leadership of the Madras Congress Party, (Mr. Satyamurti in particular,) favours the idea of office-acceptance. It is but natural that they should have discussed the pros and cons of the coming session and given a lead. But it is widely circulated that Mr. C. R. and Mr. Satyamurti tried their best to see that resolutions on vital issues were not moved, and under some pretext or other carried through the sterile Conference. It is also said that the means employed by the official command to achieve this end were underhand. The Karaikudi Conference is an example which illustrates full well the general complaint that a few Liberals have got into the Congress and are turning it into channels profitable to themselves. There is a great need for a 'purge' within the Congress party to-day. When Mr. Satyamurti turns the Congress into a Liberal organisation there are quite a large number of selfish, job-hunting politicians from other opposition camps who would seek shelter under the Congress banner so that they may not lose their political chances. The result will be that even if the Congress should decide to resign offices and take to wrecking the constitution, the men in office will find it opportune to 'cross the floor' or just turn 'blacklegs' to save their skin. The Congress if it really stands for national independence should not try to make itself a channel for opportunists.

The Late Comrade Saklatwala

The passing away of Comrade Saklatwala removes one of the most veteran fighters in India's cause. His life was one long record of service to his country, and though a communist he identified himself with every progressive cause without displaying any dogmatism. He fought against Imperialism, both against the exploitation of one class by another, and one race by another. The proletariat both of India and England, in fact of the whole world have thus lost a great leader in his death.

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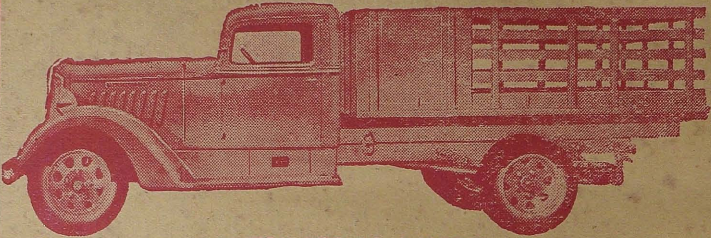

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